



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

*TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON AGING  
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Testimony Supporting Senate Bill No. 841

AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE DEPARTMENT ON AGING

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Senator Prague, Representative Serra and distinguished members of the Select Committee on Aging, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on Senate Bill No. 841, An Act Concerning the State Department on Aging.

This bill establishes the new State Department on Aging. In general, this bill structures the new Department on Aging in consideration of the recommendations of three studies of this issue: the Reestablishment of the Department on Aging Task Force Report (February 2006), the Connecticut Long-Term Care Needs Assessment (June 2007) and the Study for Re-Establishment of a Department on Aging conducted by Southern Connecticut State University on this issue.

Specifically, this bill makes the following changes:

**Section 1.** This section codifies the establishment of the State Department on Aging (SDA) effective July 1, 2009. The bill directs the Department of Social Services (DSS) to continue to administer programs under the department's Aging Services Division until such time as a Commissioner of the State Department on Aging is appointed and staff are hired. Once the new agency is fully operational, the bill authorizes the Governor to exercise her existing statutory authority to transfer funding for functions that are transferring from DSS to SDA with the approval of the Finance Advisory Committee.

**Section 2-3.** These sections transfer the existing regional service structure, funding allocation methodology, and general responsibilities under the Older Americans Act to the State Department on Aging.

**Section 4.** This section transfers responsibility for the community services policy manual to the State Department on Aging. The community services manual is currently a responsibility of the Aging Services Division of DSS.

**Section 5.** This section transfers the Adult Foster Care program to the State Department on Aging. The Adult Foster Care program is currently funded within the Services to the Elderly account. This program matches an elderly adult with a host family, which provides assistance with daily living needs. Funding provides support services to the host family.

**Section 6-7.** These sections transfer authority to SDA to provide grants for the purposes of carrying out the Older Americans Act and allow SDA to use up to 5% of funds for administrative purposes.

**Section 8.** This section transfers responsibility for CHOICES, Connecticut's program for health insurance assistance, outreach, information and referral, counseling and eligibility screening, to the State Department on Aging.

**Section 9.** This section requires the Commissioner of Social Services, in consultation with the Commissioner of Aging, to make information available to senior citizens and disabled persons concerning any pharmaceutical company's drug program through ConnPACE, CHOICES and 211-Infoline. While ConnPACE and Infoline will remain with DSS and CHOICES will move to SDA, this section requires coordination between the partner agencies in this effort.

**Section 10.** This section transfers authority and responsibility for the Alzheimer Respite Care program from DSS to SDA. The Alzheimer Respite Care program provides up to \$3,500 per year to a family to provide respite relief for caregivers. Within this section, references to the Alzheimer Respite Care program as a demonstration project are removed. In addition, an obsolete reference to the funding restrictions/allowances under the original demonstration program is repealed.

**Section 11.** This section transfers responsibility from DSS to SDA for nutritional programs to needy elderly persons. SDA will be responsible for administering the elderly home-delivered and congregate meals program.

**Section 12-18.** These sections transfer the Long Term Care Ombudsman function, which is required by federal law, to the State Department on Aging. The Long Term Care Ombudsman is charged with protecting the health, safety, welfare and rights of long term care residents mainly by investigating and resolving complaints and concerns.

I would like to again thank the committee for the opportunity to present this testimony. I respectfully request the Committee support this bill and, as always, my staff and I are available if you have any questions.